

Dept. of Education Says Central High Will Reopen Dec. 2

Education / **Published On November 25, 2019 09:46 PM /**

Staff Consortium **November 25, 2019**

Image not found or type unknown



Officials discuss odor issue on Central High School Campus By. The Department of Education

The St. Croix Central High School is expected to reopen and resume normal operations on Mon., Dec. 2, following a series of actions taken by the V.I. Department of Education (D.O.E.) that includes five days of air-quality monitoring by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), D.O.E. has announced.

In an effort to provide stakeholder groups the opportunity to experience the Central High campus since mitigation efforts began on Nov. 16, Department of Education officials hosted an extensive walkthrough of the campus on Nov. 25 with parents,

teachers, Senate and Board of Education members, and union representatives in attendance. There, David Rosoff, on-scene coordinator with the EPA, confirmed that his agency's monitoring of the campus has yielded no presence of harmful gas emissions.

"So far, since we have been here since Thursday afternoon, we have not seen any levels of hydrogen sulfide, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen cyanide—those are the main components that would react—on campus that would cause any concerns at all," he said.

However, Rosoff said the EPA has begun talks with the nearby Limetree Bay Terminals, which expects to begin refining oil early next year under the name Limetree Bay Refining, LLC, to determine if the noxious odor that caused students and staff to experience symptoms of vomiting and headaches on Nov. 12, 13 and 18 might be originating from the plant.

The Department of Education, in conjunction with partner agencies, had completed a series of mitigation actions prior to the EPA's arrival on the Central High campus on Nov. 21. Blocked sewage lines identified on and near the campus were cleared and deodorized, and damaged manholes underwent minor repairs.

While on the campus walkthrough on Nov. 25, an area of the campus that experienced oil spillage from heavy equipment brought on to the Central High campus on Nov. 16 to clear the clogged sewer lines was found to still be emanating a gaseous odor after two previous cleanings. Under the advisement of environmentalists from the Department of Planning & Natural Resources, the affected soil and concrete were unearthed, properly disposed of and resurfaced with fresh materials.

Department of Health officials will hold informational sessions on the Central High campus on Dec. 2 to reassure students and staff, and answer any questions they might have. Government agencies will be on hand to provide support as needed.